DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 211 694 CE 030 931

AUTHOR Brooks, Kent
TITLE "You Can Too."
PUB DATE Dec 81
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Vocational Association (Atlanta, GA, December 6, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cooperative Education; Cooperative Planning; *Cooperative Programs; Educational Cooperation; Educational Needs; Educational Planning; Guidelines; Industrial Training; Industry; Instructional Materials; Material Development; Needs Assessment; *Program Development; *School Business Relationship; *School Role; *State Programs; *Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

Experience has shown that it is possible for vocational educators and industry representatives to work together to meet the education development needs of employees in new and expanding industries. In order to remain a factor in economic/industrial development, adult vocational education must assist industry in identifying their training needs, developing training program curricula, selecting instructors, and administering the program. Based on their recent experiences in cooperating with industry to develop new training programs, members of the Mississippi Research and Development Center have developed a set of guidelines pertaining to working with industry, developing educational materials, and determining the range of services to be provided to industry. Included among these guidelines are the following: determining types of industries to receive priority; confining services to the areas of job education and job development; securing and ensuring maximum possible industry involvement; realizing ability, resource, and time limitations; using audio visual aids; modifying existing company documents to make them appropriate training materials; and selecting qualified primary and support staff. (MN)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

"YOU CAN TOO"

By Kent Brooks*

Introduction

My experience in industry services began in 1966 as coordinator of a part-time cooperative education program at Greenville High School, Greenville, Mississippi. Here, I was given two responsibilities. One was to select and place junior and senior high school students into part-time jobs, and to help them develop skills needed to succeed in the workplace. This responsibility was accomplished in cooperation with employers who were willing to provide jobs suitable for the students and to take the time required to teach skills on the job.

My second responsibility at Greenville High School was to develop and administer adult vocational industrial education programs. These programs were planned in cooperation with local industry, who enrolled their employees in the programs. Following this experience, I prepared and validated, with industry, several curriculum guides for the State of Mississippi. Since 1973, my assignment has been developing training programs for new and expanding industry in Mississippi. During this period, our staff at the Research and Curriculum Unit at Mississippi State University has prepared more than 175 training manuals in cooperation with 72 industries.

These experiences have shown that it is possible for educators and industry representatives to work together. We can't wait for them to

* Kent Brooks is coordinator of Industry Services, Research and Curriculum Unit, Mississippi State University. Presentation made to the Adult Vocational Education Section, American Vocational Education Convention, Atlanta, Georgia, December 6, 1981.

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come to us. Nor, can they depend on us to provide for all of their education and development needs. But, we can sit down together and combine resources. You can, too!

Signs of Times

For too long, industry and education have lived in two different worlds. We in education have our programs and curriculums. They have their production and inventories. There are many signs that this situation is changing. Vocational-technical education divisions in many states have taken bold steps in recent years to assist new and expanding industry to train their prospective employees. The American Vocational Association, under the leadership of Dr. Krishan Paul and others, has recently researched and reported through conferences on the nation-wide state-of-the-art of industrial services provided through vocational education agencies. The study resulted in a program development guide, which will be available shortly for use in expanding industry services to other locations.

The National Center for Vocational Education at Ohio State University has a highly successful program of research and development in labor-education-industry involvement. In fact, the Center held a two day pre-AVA workshop on this topic this week.

There are also many signs that industry is becoming more concerned about the education development needs of individuals for obvious productivity reasons. For example, a new Weyerhaeuser Pulp and Paper Complex in Columbus, Mississippi has joined the Mississippi Division of Vocational-Technical Education, the Research and Curriculum Unit at Mississippi State University, and the Golden Triangle Vocational-

Technical Center in a unique person-centered education and development program. Scheduled to start-up in July 1982, the Weyerhaeuser Pulp and Paper Complex represents the second largest investment ever made by a manufacturing firm in our State -- $750 million. The most interesting aspect of the Weyerhaeuser project is their attitude toward new employees. People will not be labeled by such traditional terms as employees, supervisors, or secretaries. Each person will be referred to as a team member. The idea is to have everyone develop their talents to the maximum extent possible. To enable persons to develop needed skills, about 200 education and development modules have been prepared. Included are numerous modules on implementation of the team concept in plant operations, as well as modules for the technical skills of paper making. An abundant amount of time has been alloted during equipment commissioning and plant start-up for new team members to study and learn necessary information and skills. This concern for people has permeated the entire Weyerhaeuser Pulp and Paper Complex organization. It is amazing how everyone is speaking the same language. Weyerhaeuser is betting that a well planned education and development effort on the front end will make a difference in being competitive in the paper industry markets.

In the Sunday, November 29, 1981, issue of the Delta Democrat Times, the management concept to be used in a new $500 million Nissan/ Datsun motors plant in Smyrna, Tennessee was described in a UPI article. Company leaders believe that Datsun trucks can be made just as well and as cheaply in middle Tennessee as in Japan. The way they plan to do it is throught the education and development of employees.

In the past, industry has relied upon our educational institutions to provide the basic skills needed by prospective applicants. This has been accomplished to some degree of success by the normal education process, with support provided throught adult basic education courses and secondary, post-secondary, and adult vocational-technical education programs. Many industries have not placed a priority on training. Others have relegated the training function to a personnel director who has planned training courses when time permits, and usually on a haphazard basis.

This situation is rapidly changing. Companies such as Du Pont, Weyerhaeuser, and General Motors are making major investments into education and development. Small existing industries are learning about the benefits of education and development in sister plants, as well as from larger companies across town, and wish to have programs for their employees. Most, however, do not really know their needs. Here, adult vocational education enters the picture because much assistance is needed in identifying their needs, developing the curriculum, selecting instructors and administering the program.

The field is white unto harvest. I believe that vocational educators must become more involved as a partner with industry, or we will cease to be a factor in economic/industrial development.

You can be a factor! With all this as a background, I want to discuss briefly the success that the State of Mississippi has had in reaching out to our citizens and industry.

The Mississippi Experience

Between 1979 and 1981, the Industry Services arm of the Mississippi

Division of Vocational-Technical Education financed the training of 13,815 men and women for manufacturing jobs throughout the state. At a cost of only $80.59 per person trained, these employees earned at least $170 million dollars annually during 1981. These jobs, providing far higher wages and benefits than the great majority of the new employees ever received previously, are principally in the higher-paying durable goods manufacturing industries.

At the request of Governor William Winter, the Mississippi Research and Development Center in Jackson conducted a survey in January 1981 of 50 large manufacturers using the start-up training programs. The survey indicated that every company contacted would recommend Mississippi's start-up training program to a new industry that might need such a program. And, an overwhelming 88% rated their experience with the program as either excellent or good. The Research and Development Center recommended wider use of this obviously valuable program throughout the state. The program does work for the manufacturers who use it. It will work in your district, too!

Guidelines for Involvement

We have learned from experience that it is impossible for education agencies to be "everything to everybody." Here are some example rules we follow at the Research and Curriculum Unit in working with industry:

1. A. We have priorities. We don't need to be working on the wrong things. Our first priority is to train persons for new jobs known to exist in new industries moving into our state. We define a new industry as one which has decided to 1) establish in a new community or 2) occupy an existing or new facility.

We consider an industry new until all pre-determined production lines have been staffed, but not to exceed three years.

B. A second priority is expanding industry. This is one which is starting a new production line or department with a net result of 15 or more new jobs. Included are those companies which start new production lines in existing facilities, as well as those which expand production operations in new facilities.

C. A third priority is existing industry. An existing industry is one which has been established for more than three years and no new jobs are being created. This is not suggesting bypassing existing industry. On the contrary, local vocational education personnel can meet many of the needs of existing industries through regular adult vocational education programs.

For a given industry, the priority emphasis placed on assignments should be based on 1) the greatest number of people to be trained, 2) the greatest impact the industry will have on the economy, and 3) the amount of assistance actually needed for training.

2. We do not develop public relations materials for a company, nor company policy manuals. These are not directly related to job education and development.

3. We do not develop manuals unless a significant number of people will use it. With limited resources, we try not to become involved in a project in which fewer than 20 persons will benefit.

4. We print manuals one time only. The responsibility for any reprints rests with the company.

5. We make out-of-state visits to parent companies only if work on

the educational materials can be accomplished better than in the state. All the public relations work needed has been accomplished when we are assigned to the project.

6. We do not move forward in a project unless we can obtain full cooperation for development from industry resource persons. The most successful programs are those in which the industry has had a major role in developing. This includes providing instructors if they can best do the job.

7. Another point is to know your ability and time limits. For example, we have chosen not to be involved directly in supervisory training at the state level. We don't have the staff to develop both employee training programs and teach supervisory courses at this time. Rather, the supervisory programs are developed and administered at the local education agency. A noteworthy supervisory training program has been developed by Doug Adams at Mississippi Delta Junior College.

There are also some principles we have learned about developing educational materials.

1. A. First, adults are not generally prolific readers. Therefore, we use a lot of video tape and other visual aids. We illustrate profusely our education materials, and use as little material as possible which must be read.

   B. The format we are using at present consists of an audio-tape and a reference manual. The reference manual contains diagrams, photographs, flow charts, and progress reviews which are referenced in the audio-tape. The reference manual

contains few words. For each module, we also develop a final examination and a task certification checklist, which the trainee and supervisor sign after the trainee gains competency in the area.

2. Materials which are compiled from existing company documents are not necessarily ready for a training manual. Usually, it must be reshaped in order to be usable. We use a lot of vendor materials, and it too often requires redevelopment.
3. Manual development is no easy task. The secret is being able to apply the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair. Even though you go out and collect the information, you must come back into the office to mold and shape it into a finished product. We have discovered that there are not many persons who can develop the detailed, technical manuals required to prepare persons for real jobs.
4. To be a production group, we have learned that you must have a good support staff. We are fortunate to have word processors, an editor, an artist-illustrator, and a printer. We are not a commercial printer and there are some limitations in producing manuals within the time frames established by manufacturing firms. However, the support staff is invaluable in completing a quality product.
5. The compilation of training content requires confidence, skills, and tanacity. Every industry has a different body of knowledge and skills, and each developer must be able to interview resource persons, observe operation procedures, and determine what must be

incorporated into manuals. Our technical writers are also amateur photographers and can make excellent use of tape recorders and short-hand writing during interviews. They persist in asking questions until the material is understood. Some people in our state think that we have the glamour job in vocational education. This may be true, but it is awfully hard work.

I should emphasize that it is not always necessary to develop attractive manuals. Rather, you determine from the industry what is needed and provide whatever materials are needed to do the job and no more. Often, the industry representives will cooperate in developmental costs if asked.

Range of Services Which Can Be Provided

One service which can always be provided to an industry is consultation. Many company representatives who have been thrust into education and development roles simply do not know how to get started. Consultation includes 1) giving information about the services available from your agency, 2) advising of services available from other agencies, and based on discussions with the client, 3) making recommendations concerning their education and development needs. We are receiving more requests for services which do not result in training programs. The most common assistance is helping industry assess the competency levels of their employees. This often includes leading them in developing a plan, followed by assistance in developing assessment instruments and competency analysis.

You have several development options when assisting a given

industry. These include preparing:

1. Indepth manuals.
2. Orientation manuals.
3. Preparing drawings, diagrams, charts, graphs, and worksheets to be used as handouts in the program.
4. Instructor's lesson-plan guides.

If only basic skills are needed, off-the-shelf, pre-packaged materials can be used. Still, someone must help the instructor prepare a lesson plan.

Summary

In summary, out greatest challenge is to find out what needs to be done, and then to do it. The business of industry services is a serious endeavor. Many lives can be affected positively. You, too, can be an active member of the industry services team. I encourage you to examine your role, learn more about industry-education cooperation, and then proceed to provide the education and development services needed in your community.